

*Mr WESLEY's Principles detected:*

OR, A

D E F E N C E

O F T H E

P R E F A C E to the *Edinburgh*  
Edition of *ASPASIO Vindicated*;

In answer to Mr KERSHAW'S

E A R N E S T A P P E A L.

To which is prefixed,

The P R E F A C E itself, for the Use of  
those who have the *English* Editions  
of *ASPASIO Vindicated*.

E D I N B U R G H:

Printed for WILLIAM GRAY,

Front of the *New Exchange*.

M D C C L X V.

As the Rev. Mr John Wesley, in his Answer to Aspasio Vindicated, expressed a doubt of its being the genuine work of the late Rev. Mr James Hervey, which Mr Kershaw, in his Reply to the Preface of the Edinburgh edition, has embraced and propagated; it is proper to inform the reader, that an edition of these letters has been published at London, by Mr John Hervey, the author's brother, and from the Revd author's own manuscripts, which puts the authenticity of the performance beyond doubt: and on a careful comparing the copy published by Mr Hervey with the one printed in Edinburgh, the reader may see with his own eyes, that there is no material difference between the two editions.





PREFACE to the *Edinburgh* Edition  
O F  
A S P A S I O Vindicated.

MR HERVEY's writings have gained such a favourable reception among Christians of all denominations, that nothing farther need be said to recommend his DEFENCE of *Theron and Aspasio*, than to assure the public, that it contains the strongest internal marks of being genuine; and is equal, if not superior, to any of his controversial pieces published in his life-time.

It was printed in England a few months ago, but not published: so that, it is believed, not four copies of it have reached Scotland. The subject is deeply interesting: the manner in which it is managed, scriptural, judicious and animated. Mistakes there may be in the illustrations of certain passages of scripture, and possibly too in a few lesser doctrinal sentiments incidentally introduced. Though Mr HERVEY was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, he knew but in part, and prophesied but in part. He was too wise and good to arrogate to himself infallibility. Yet that is no reason why so useful and seasonable a performance should remain unknown.

Many religious societies have been lately erected in Edinburgh, under the direction of the Reverend Mr JOHN WESLEY; and most of their members are persons warmly attached to the doctrine, worship and discipline established in the church of Scotland.

Possibly the following sheets may convince some of them, that Mr Wesley is by no means so orthodox as they have hitherto imagined, in that doctrine of justification through the righteousness of CHRIST, which Luther esteemed the characteristic of a standing or falling church.

Mr Wesley has said, *Plain Account*, p. 4. "It is a point we chiefly insist upon, that orthodoxy, or right opinion, is at best but a very slender part of religion, if any part of it at all." But, though I am far from thinking contempt-

ibly of that gentleman's abilities, I much question if he will not find it a task too hard for them to prove, that ignorance or error are as friendly to virtue, as just sentiments; and that infinite wisdom has revealed a scheme of doctrines, which men who have the best advantages for understanding it may, with perfect innocence and entire safety, mistake or disbelieve.

Many sober-minded Arminians would be shocked at the virulent reflections he has cast on the Calvinist doctrines, of election, and the perseverance of the saints, in his pieces against Mr Whitefield and Dr Gill. But as the Publisher cannot at present command a sight of his other writings, he contents himself with a few extracts from his late *Preservative against unsettled notions*.

P. 148, 149. he asserts baptismal regeneration; or, that in baptism, a principle of grace is infused, which will not be wholly taken away, unless we quench the Holy Spirit by long-continued wickedness.

P. 163,—170. he attempts to prove, that both the church and the civil magistrate have a power to decree religious ceremonies neither enjoined nor forbid in scripture; and may warrantably refuse to admit into their society, or to administer the Lord's supper, to such who in these matters, in their own nature indifferent, refuse to comply with their decrees.

P. 179. "Men are not elected till the day of their conversion to God." P. 180. "Predestination is God's fore-appointing obedient believers to salvation, not without, but according to his foreknowledge of all their works, from the foundation of the world."

P. 183. "Our obedience to CHRIST is the cause of his becoming the author of eternal salvation to us."

P. 184,—192. is spent in attempting to prove, that CHRIST died for all men; and that to say, he died for the elect as elect, is to say, that he lost his labour of love, and accomplished a solemn nothing; because the elect, as such, are not lost, nor captives, nor unjust, nor dead in trespasses and sins.

P. 192. "We believe, that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left; but that GOD, when of his own free grace he gave the promise of a Saviour to him and

and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation."

P. 237. "Whether it be lawful or not, (which itself may be disputed, being not so clear a point as some may imagine), it is by no means expedient for us to separate from the established church." (He speaks of the Church of England.)

For this he assigns twelve reasons. The 8th is, "Because, to form the plan of a new church would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed), with much more wisdom, and greater depth and extensiveness of thought, than any of us are masters of."

How far this modest declaration corresponds with Mr Wesley's conduct, let others judge. Is it less difficult to form the plan of a church within a church, whose members in South Britain profess to belong to the Church of England, and those in North Britain to the Church of Scotland, while yet their most important spiritual concerns are inspected and governed by teachers, who, in that capacity, have no dependence on either of these churches, but are sent, continued, or removed, at the pleasure of Mr Wesley?

P. 241. "We look upon ourselves not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party, but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but Heathens in heart and life, to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity."—And a little after, "We look upon the Methodists not as any particular party, but as living witnesses in and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach."

If the Methodist teachers confined themselves to preaching, there might be some room for this plea: but hardly can this be pled, when they form bands or classes, where measures are followed offensive to many judicious Christians. Could they not be witnesses to Christianity, without that inquiry into one another's religious experiences, which Christ has nowhere enjoined, either as a moral duty, or a mean of grace?

P. 243. "Might it not be another, at least prudential rule, for every Methodist preacher not to frequent any dissenting meeting? If we do this, certainly our people will."

will." Now this is actually separating from the church. A little after, "If it be said, But at the church we are fed with chaff, whereas at the meeting we have wholesome food: we answer, 1. The prayers of the church are not chaff. 2. The Lord's supper is not chaff. Yea, 3. In almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important truths; and whoever has a spiritual discernment, may easily separate the chaff from the wheat therein. 4. How little is the case mended at the meeting? Either the teachers are new-light men, denying the Lord that bought them, and overturning his gospel from the very foundations; or they are predestinarians, and so preach predestination and final perseverance more or less. Now whatever this may be to them who were educated therein, yet to those of our brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated experience shews it is not wholesome food: rather to them it has the effect of deadly poison."

Perhaps some may ascribe it to an opposite prudential rule, calculated for the Edinburgh meridian, that Methodist preachers there seldom or never attend the qualified Episcopal meetings, but Presbyterian churches; and churches too, in which the doctrines of predestination and the saints' perseverance are explicitly preached. But the last part of the paragraph just now transcribed, affords a different solution of that strange phaenomenon. Mr Wesley, by his profound skill in medicine, has found out, that poison may possibly prove harmless, where men have been early enough, and long enough accustomed to swallow it; which fortunes to be the case with the good people of Scotland, as to the poisonous doctrines of Calvinism!

P. 244. "Nor is it expedient for any Methodist preacher to imitate the Dissenters in their manner of praying, either in his tone, in his language, or in the length of his prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five minutes: neither should we sing like them, in a slow drawling manner. We sing swift, both because it saves time, and because it tends to awake and enliven the soul." (I hope this will meet with due attention from some admirers of Mr Wesley, who scruple attending in churches where the swift method of singing, without reading, has been lately introduced.)

The *Preservative* is concluded, p. 245. by advising every Methodist



Methodist preacher carefully to read it, and his Serious Thoughts concerning perseverance and predestination, and to recommend and explain them to the Methodist societies, that they may be no more tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, but may be settled in one mind and one judgment.

This advice, if known to the Methodist teachers in Edinburgh, has been so little regarded by them, that Mr Wesley's Preservative, and other controversial writings, are carefully secreted from the greatest part of the members of their societies, possibly from a prudent jealousy, lest they should spy somewhat in them that might abate their fondness to place themselves under his direction. Truth and honesty chuse to enter openly and undisguised. He that entereth not in by the door of a plain, simple declaration of his sentiments, but insinuateth himself into men's affections, by concealing or varnishing over his opinions, the same is a thief and a robber. Ministers of the gospel, by manifestation of the truth, should recommend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Walking in craftiness, handling the word of God deceitfully, keeping back from hearers what may be profitable, and, from affectation of popularity, shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, indicate more of the wisdom of the serpent, than of the harmlessness of the dove; and, on the most candid supposition, proceed from a zeal for God not according to knowledge.——The publisher never received the least provocation from any of the Methodists; nay, has been treated by them with unmerited respect: many of them he esteems and loves for the truth's sake which is in them, and shall be with them for ever. Of the sincere piety of some of their teachers, nay even of their sound principles, he would think favourably. But when he reflects, that one is at the head of their societies, who has blended with some precious gospel-truths, a medley of Arminian, Antinomian, and enthusiastic errors, he thinks it high time to sound an alarum to all who would wish to transmit to posterity the pure faith once delivered to the saints, seriously to consider what the end of these things may probably be. Damnable heresies, superstitious rites, and the wildest fanaticism, may gradually gain ground;



and opinions and practices take place, the mention of which would shock many, it is hoped the greatest part of people, in this country, at present attached to Methodism. If men are once brought to believe, that right opinion is a slender part of religion, or no part of it at all, there is scarce any thing so foolish, or so wicked, which Satan may not prompt them to, by transforming himself into an angel of light.

Edinburgh, Jan. 7.

1765.

# D E F E N C E

O F T H E

## P R E F A C E to A S P A S I O Vindicated,

In answer to Mr K E R S H A W 's

## E A R N E S T A P P E A L.

I HAVE neither leisure nor inclination to criticise the pious reflections, and devout hymns, which make up so considerable a part of Mr Kershaw's *Earnest Appeal*. Though they scarcely glance at the argument of the preface, they are not ill suited to insinuate favourable sentiments of the Methodists, to swell the size of the Appeal, and to apologize for its price.

Mr K. has, on different occasions, tried his talent of torturing words to a sense that may afford him a specious handle for ridiculing the sentiments and reasonings of his opponents.

I had begun the preface with saying, " Mr HERVEY's writings have gained such a reception among Christians of all denominations, that nothing further need be said to recommend his defence of *Theron and Aspasio*, than to assure the public, that it contains the strongest internal marks of being genuine." Hence a handle is taken, *Appeal*, p. 35. to represent me as arguing, That because Mr Hervey's writings published in his lifetime gained a favourable reception, therefore his name in the front is a sufficient recommendation of a posthumous book, that confessedly got into the world as it were by stealth. — Is this a fair comment on the text? Would an unbiassed reader consider my words, as importing, that the name of an author, without external or internal marks of authenticity, was any recommendation? They indeed import, that  
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the style and manner of *Aspasio vindicated*, prove, that Mr Hervey wrot it. That evidence, I must be excused for thinking, remains still unshaken, after all the story of Mr Cudworth. If that gentleman's heart was profligate enough to prompt him to an infamous forgery, of which however there is no proof: yet hardly was his genius adequate for a task, in which the most artful and cautious impostors have generally failed; counterfeiting, I mean, throughout a work of considerable length, the most striking and characteristical indications of authenticity.

Mr K. insists, *p. 37. & seq.* that I confess mistakes in *Aspasio vindicated*, both in doctrinal sentiments and illustrations of scripture, and yet pronounce them equal, if not superior, to any of his controversial writings published in his lifetime: whence he argues, I must think there are such mistakes in these other writings.

Had Mr K. read the preface leisurely, and with attention, he would have observed I only say, "mistakes there may be, &c.;" and found my saying so, simply on this, that Mr Hervey was not infallible. This is no more a confession of actual mistakes in *Aspasio vindicated*, than acknowledging myself liable to err, would be a confession, that some of my present opinions are actually false.

Though I had confessed what Mr K. alledges, his consequence would not hold. I think some of the works of Chemnitius, Gerhard, Bengelius, and other Lutheran divines, superior in value to certain modern Calvinist pieces; in which last there are, notwithstanding, fewer errors: and it is as consistent with equalling, or even preferring *Aspasio vindicated*, to Mr Hervey's other works, to suppose lesser mistakes in the first, from which the last are free.

Far less would it follow, from my acknowledging mistakes in all Mr Hervey's writings, that I looked upon them as unprofitable, and not calculated to do good. (See *Appeal, p. 37.*) If no books in which there are any mistakes are calculated to do good, I am afraid no bulky book in the world, except the Old Testament in Hebrew, and the New in Greek, would deserve a reading; nay, nor even these, unless we knew they were exactly printed from copies in which there was no error. Does not Mr Kershaw think, that not a few mistakes in *Theron and Aspasio* have been

been pointed out by Mr Wesley, in his letter to the author? and yet does he not say, *p.* 38. "It is certain Mr Hervey's writings have been weapons, by which God has done great things, in instructing the foolish, convincing the erroneous, &c. &c." Mr Wesley has recommended a number of books at the end of his *Reflections* on the conduct of human life. I suppose he will readily acknowledge, that there may be mistakes even in his own tracts and Christian library; and that there are mistakes in Epicuretus, and Marcus Antoninus, not to say Terence, Horace, or Martial. All of them, however, appear in the list; which, it is evident from the design of the book to which they are annexed, they would not have done, if he had not looked upon them as profitable, and calculated to do good. Is candor confined to Methodists! and are all else such bigots, that they cannot esteem a book useful, in which they see some small mistakes!

What occasion then has the preface given for the exclamation, (*Appeal*, *p.* 27.) "Where is the glory of Mr Hervey himself, if all his writings are so full of mistakes? His remembrance is dear to many. But if this be the case, as it appears from the above, we may truly say, in mournful accents, Where is his glory?" Is saying that there are mistakes in all Mr Hervey's writings, (had that indeed been said), the same thing with saying, they are full of mistakes? Where were Mr Kershaw's eyes, if he fancied I said so? and where was his honesty, if he did not?

What is said, *Appeal*, *p.* 46. has more appearance both of fairness and of argument: "Can that be scriptural, which mistakes, 1. Scripture illustrations (I should rather have said proofs)? 2. Doctrinal sentiments, allowing they were the lesser sort only, and but few in number likewise? By the same charitable allowance, however, I hope soon to make it appear, that the editor must either allow Mr Wesley to be orthodox, or himself possibly a little too partial." If Mr Wesley's mistakes were only in a few illustrations of certain passages of scripture, (not scripture illustrations, which was not the phrase in the preface), or in lesser doctrinal sentiments, I acknowledge, his writings might be in the main orthodox and



and useful ; though, at the same time, guarding against these lesser errors might be no useless employment for one who had sufficient leisure : but if his mistakes are numerous, and some of them capital ones too, the recommending Mr Hervey's writings will be no reason for recommending his. How numerous Mr Wesley's mistakes are, I have shown in the preface, and will further show in the sequel of this defence. How important some of them are, *e. g.* Justification through our own faith and obedience, and the sinless perfection of all born of God, I need not say.

But Mr Kershaw would have the public believe, that Mr Wesley cannot be justly charged with the first of these errors. He tells us, *p.* 41. Mr Wesley uniformly asserts, and that without wavering since the 1738, that no man is justified in the sight of God by any works done by him of any kind, either before or after believing, nor by sanctifying grace inherent in him ; but by the righteousness of Christ alone, (including both what he did and suffered), imputed to us, and received by a true and lively faith ; and that faith itself does not justify as it is a work, but as it apprehends Christ ; and that if Mr Wesley has styled faith *a condition of justification*, he has told us, in the first volume of his sermons, that all he means is, that a man cannot be justified without it. From *p.* 51.—74. he attempts to show, that Mr Wesley has uniformly explained the doctrine of justification in this manner. Many of the expressions to which he appeals might have been honestly used by one who believed not the imputation of Christ's active obedience, some of them I think could not ; particularly what is cited, *p.* 58. from Wesley's Principles of a Methodist : " Christ is now the righteousness of every one that truly " believes in him ; he for them paid the ransom by his " death ; he for them fulfilled the law in his life : so that " now in him and by him every believer may be called a " fulfiller of the law." And, *p.* 60. from his notes on the epistle to the Romans, " We conclude then, that a " man is justified by faith ; and even by this, not as it is a " work, but as it apprehends Christ."

But though these and other passages prove that Mr Wesley has asserted the scripture doctrine of justification through

through the righteousness of Christ, in writings both of an older and later date; what name is due to an attestation, that he has uniformly, and without wavering, asserted that doctrine? I shall say nothing of his letter to Mr Hervey, as it has been so often reprinted: but I would remind Mr Kershaw, that in the year 1745, Mr Wesley published an extract of Mr Baxter on justification. There an attempt is made, *p.* 3, 4, 5. to confute the opinion that Christ did as properly obey as suffer in our stead; and that his active obedience is imputed to us for the making of us righteous, and giving us a title to the kingdom. It is argued, *p.* 24,—26. that it is faith in a proper sense that is said to justify, and not Christ's righteousness only, which it receives: and that faith properly justifies, not as apprehending Christ and his righteousness, but as fulfilling the condition of a new covenant. And, to crown all, it is maintained, *p.* 26,—31. that repentance, forgiveness of injuries, new obedience, &c. are conditions of pardon and eternal life: and that therefore, when it is said that faith only justifies, the meaning is, that faith justifies, as implying all other parts of the condition of the new covenant, and as the great master-duty of the gospel, to which all the rest are reducible.

This year, 1765, Mr Wesley has published a large treatise on justification, extracted from Mr John Goodwin, as containing the real scripture-doctrine relating to that article. The great design of that treatise is to prove, that act the of faith is imputed to men for righteousness; and that the active obedience of Christ, or his fulfilling the moral law, was never intended by God to be that righteousness wherewith we are justified. Mr Wesley tells us, Mr Goodwin was a firm and zealous Calvinist at the time he wrote that book. If he professed himself so, (in which I hope Mr Wesley is wrong informed), his integrity and orthodoxy were much of a piece. One thing is certain, there are few books in English, in which the Popish and Arminian objections against the imputation of Christ's active obedience have been more keenly urged. If, then, Mr Kershaw would vindicate his assertion of Mr Wesley's uniform orthodoxy, he must maintain that the following propositions are consistent: We are justified by the righteousness

teousness of Christ alone, including both what he did and suffered. Christ's fulfilling the moral law, or active obedience, was never intended to be that righteousness wherewith we are justified.—Faith does not justify as it is a work, but as it apprehends Christ. Faith properly justifies, not as apprehending Christ and his righteousness, but as an act of obedience to a law, or as fulfilling the condition of a new covenant.—No man is justified in the sight of God, by any works done by him either before or after believing, nor by sanctifying grace inherent in him. Repentance, forgiveness of injuries, new obedience, &c. are conditions of pardon and eternal life: and faith justifies as the great master-duty of the gospel, to which all the rest are reducible.—When Mr Kershaw has reconciled these glaring contradictions, he bids fair for gratifying the sceptics with a proof, that darkness and light, falsehood and truth, absurdity and evidence, are one and the same thing. “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? My brethren, these things ought not so to be.” Whether the doctrine of justification, as asserted in the confessions of the Lutheran and Reformed churches, or as explained by Arminian divines, is preferable, has indeed been disputed. But his understanding must be of a monstrous make, who can digest both as equally wholesome.

Mr Wesley, in a late advertisement about Goodwin on justification, has apologised for himself in a way very different from Mr Kershaw. He tells us, as the expression, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ for justification, was capable of a sound sense, his brother and he, not only did not oppose it, but sometimes even used it themselves, especially in verse, where allowance is made for phrases not exactly proper. But they soon found the inconvenience of those expressions. Antinomianism came in with a full tide. They were persuaded that those phrases were not only unscriptural, but dangerous in the highest degree, tending to destroy the very end of our Lord's coming into the world, namely, to save his people from their sins; yea, in fact, made thousands easy though not thus saved. Yet the fear of grieving any who were upright of heart, and yet wedded to those modes of expression,

expression, kept him for many years from speaking explicitly on that head. Nor indeed had he leisure to speak so largely as was necessary to obviate many difficulties. But Dr Goodwin has done it to his hand, and confirmed whatever he advances by scripture and reason.

Let me briefly review this narrative. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ for justification, is an expression generally used to signify the imputation both of his active and passive obedience. If, therefore, he uses the expression, who denies the first, his trumpet gives an uncertain sound: I might have said, a deceitful sound; especially when other phrases are used along with this, which seem to imply the common doctrine; *e. g.*

*Jesus hath lived, hath died for me.  
Jesu! thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress:*

where the blood and righteousness of Christ seem to be distinguished.

But whatever apology may be made for Mr Wesley's using these hymns twenty years ago, what apology can be made for his republishing them, after the danger of using such phrases was discerned? what apology for their being daily sung by Mr Wesley, and his teachers, societies, and congregations throughout Britain and Ireland? Mr Wesley says of a collection of hymns printed at Edinburgh 1763, where the above cited verses appear, "There is not an hymn, not one verse inserted here, but what relates to the common salvation." From all this I conclude, and Mr Kershaw has done so before me, *p.* 53. that these hymns contain Mr Wesley's present sentiments.

But it was not only in verse, where, it is pled, allowance may be made for phrases not exactly proper, that Mr Wesley has used these phrases. He has used those, nay other phrases more explicit, on occasions where the greatest precision was requisite. One would expect, if any where, to find his opinions clearly stated in his *Principles of a Methodist*, of which I have by me the third edition, published at London, 1756. Yet there he says, *p.* 6, 7. "Christ therefore is now the righteousness of all them that truly

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"believe



“ believe in him. He for them paid the ransom by his death : he for them fulfilled the law in his life. So “ that now in him, and by him, every believer may be “ called a fulfiller of the law.” Was it charity to the souls of men, to suffer assertions to remain in such a book, which, before that edition, he had observed, made thousands easy, though not saved from their sins? Was fear of grieving good men, a reason for ambiguous and ensnaring expressions, or even for silence, when from the former use of such expressions, bad men (as Mr Wesley tells us in the above-cited advertisement) blessed themselves in their unrighteousness, congratulating themselves upon their being the only men, who understand, enjoy, and defend the pure gospel?

From that advertisement, however, it appears, that Dr Goodwin’s treatise on justification is to be considered as the most full and explicit account of Mr Wesley’s present sentiments of that article. If it exhibits a different view of them from what is exhibited in the hymns, and other writings, which also contain his present sentiments, Arminians may take the first, and Calvinists the last, and both may admire the sagacity of the teacher, who has shown the same marks of regard to two systems so diametrically opposite.

I make no observations on what Mr Kershaw says about Cudworth’s sentiments, *p. 44. et seq.* I have small acquaintance with his works. If he denies the necessity of inherent holiness derived from Christ, he dangerously errs. But that error cannot justly be charged upon Mr Hervey, and other asserters of the imputation of Christ’s active obedience, though their subject has not led them to insist at length on the necessity of real personal holiness.

I know not what societies Mr Kershaw aims at in what he says, *Appeal, p. 49.* “ They who cause discord and division are from the devil ; but the Methodists do not “ cause discord and division, &c. *ergo.* I should not have “ took notice of this, if it had not been to express my sorrow, that many of those called *religious societies*, that “ have been set up in this kingdom for many years before, “ seem not so warmly attached to the worship and discipline established in the church of Scotland. How do “ you

“ you know but God may have sent us to help to heal  
 “ your breaches?” If this is levelled at the religious societies of the Secession, or Presbytery of Relief, great injustice is done them. Those of the Secession have uniformly professed a warm attachment to the doctrine, worship, and discipline of the church of Scotland, though they think it their duty to separate from her present judicatories. Those of the Presbytery of Relief often occasionally communicate with ministers of the church of Scotland: and if they are under the ordinary inspection of pastors not in full communion with her, this proceeds, partly, from laudable attachments to one who did not separate from her, but was deposed for refusing to do what he thought inconsistent with his ordination vows: partly, from scruples to submit to the ministry of presentees violently intruded upon them. Both these breaches I sincerely lament, as depriving the church of Scotland of many who would be an honour and blessing to her: though I rejoice that, so far as I can learn, the most important truths of the gospel are taught in their religious assemblies. But hardly do I think these breaches are likely to be healed by Mr Wesley’s system gaining ground among members of the church of Scotland, as the principles of these separatists are no way favourable to that system.

Mr Kershaw proceeds, *Appeal*, p 74. to consider my other objections. Speaking of the extracts upon which they are founded, he says, “ What sort of an extract we “ have here, those who have seen the whole mass may “ judge for themselves.” Something very ugly is here insinuated, which he does not chuse to speak out. I did in the preface, as I do in this defence, sometimes give an account in a few lines of the intention of many pages: but if I had represented that intention falsely, Mr Kershaw’s zeal for Mr Wesley would have led him to detect me.

Mr Kershaw has endeavoured to wrap in obscurity Mr Wesley’s account of predestination, and to lead away the reader from the only question in hand, if his doctrine corresponds with that of the church of Scotland on this head, and therefore if those warmly attached to the doctrine of the church of Scotland act wisely in encouraging Methodism.

What are indeed Mr Wesley's sentiments, learn from his own words.

*Dialogue between a predestinarian and his friend*, 2d edition, Lond. 1741. p. 12. "Predestinarian. What then do you mean by the words *election* and *reprobation*?

*Friend*. I mean this. 1. God did decree from the beginning to elect or chuse in Christ all that should believe to salvation; and to reprobate all who should obstinately and finally continue in unbelief. *Predestinarian*. What then do you think of absolute unconditional election and reprobation? *Friend*. I think it cannot be found in holy writ, and that it is a plant which bears dismal fruit; an instance of which we have in *Calvin* himself, who confesses that he procured the burning to death of *Michael Servetus*, a wise and holy man, purely for differing from him in opinion in matters of religion\*."

*Scripture-doctrine concerning predestination, &c.* Lond. 1741. p. 4. "As Christ was called the Lamb slain from the

\* However unjustifiable the burning Servetus may be, predestination was no more accessory to his death than Methodism. He had attacked the doctrine of the Trinity in a most insolent and outrageous manner: representing it as an impossible monster, an imposture of the devil, a three-headed Cerberus: and asserting that all Trinitarians were truly Atheists. It was therefore no wonder if this provoked the utmost severity, in an age, when the principles of toleration were little understood, and Protestants as well as Papists agreed that heretics ought to be put to death. Urbanus Regius, a Lutheran divine, published a book A. D. 1558, to justify such severity. Nay, even so late as A. D. 1687, one Peter Gunther was put to death at Lubec for denying the divinity of Christ, the Lutheran universities of Kilan and Witteberg having signified their approbation of the sentence against him. See *Bibliothec. Brem. class. 1 fasc. 5. p. 739—768*. Whatever right Servetus might have to dissent from an established religion which appeared to him absurd, and, if you will, to reason against it, surely he had no right to rail at it, to insult it, and to blaspheme what it accounted most sacred and venerable. The Apostles demonstrated the folly of idolatry by unanswerable arguments; they enforced their reasonings by the most amazing miracles; and yet the town-clerk of Ephesus did them the justice to testify that they were no robbers of churches, nor blasphemers of the Ephesian goddess. Had they been either, infidels might have speciously urged, that their being persecuted unto death was the just reward of their rude, uncivil, hot-brained enthusiasm. Painting new opinions or practices in ludicrous colours,

the foundation of the world, and yet not slain till several thousand years after, till the day of his death; so also men are called elect from the foundation of the world, and yet are not elected perhaps till several thousand years after, till the day of their conversion to God."

*Ib. p. 5.* "If the saints are chosen to salvation through a believing of the truth, and were called to believe that truth by the hearing of the gospel, then they were not chosen before they believed the truth, and before they heard the gospel, whereby they were called to believe. But they were chosen through belief of the truth, and called to believe it by the gospel; therefore they were not chosen before they believed; much less before they had a being, any more than Christ was slain before he had a being. So plain is it, that they were not elected till they believed; although God calleth things that are not as though they were."

I had said, "Many sober-minded Arminians would be shocked at the virulent reflections Mr Wesley has cast on the Calvinist doctrines of election, &c." To this Mr Kershaw replies, *p. 74.* "1. As this is something of a personal reflection, and has been already answered by the gentleman it concerns, I have nothing to do with it. I leave the editor and Mr Wesley to decide the point. 2. I have read those pieces, but do remember no reflections, without consequences go by that name."

In Mr Wesley's letter to the supposed editor, there is not a syllable about the above charge. If he has answered it any where else, I have not heard of the answer. The second part of Mr Kershaw's apology is good for nothing. Horrible consequences falsely ascribed to a doctrine, may sometimes contain the most virulent reflections; and this

colours, and exposing the folly or knavery of those who would introduce them, may often do much to stop their progress. But of all weapons that have been used against an established religion, ribaldry is the very worst. None disoblige and offends more, and yet none does less execution. Of Calvin's confessing that he procured Servetus's death, I know no evidence. He has denied the charge, *Opusc. p. 817. Ex quo convictus est, me nullam de pœna verbum fecisse, non solum boni omnes viri mihi testes erunt; sed malis etiam concedo, ut proferant, si quid habent.*



was all that my charge against Mr Wesley imported. I am now about to prove it well grounded.

Mr Wesley's sermon, intituled *Free grace*, printed at Bristol 1739, is designed to expose the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, *i. e.* as Mr Wesley expresses it, *p. 7.* "The doctrine, that God did elect a certain number of men to salvation; that all these will be saved, and none else; that the rest of mankind God leaves to themselves, and so they follow the imaginations of their own hearts, and are at length justly punished with everlasting destruction." This doctrine he endeavours to show makes all preaching vain, and tends to destroy the comfort of religion, nay holiness too and zeal for good works, nay to overthrow the Christian revelation, by making it contradict itself. — *P. 22.* "It is a doctrine full of blasphemy: it represents Jesus Christ the righteous as an hypocrite, a deciever of the people, a man void of common sincerity." — *p. 23.* "He calls those to come to him that cannot come, those whom he knows to be unable to come, those whom he can make able to come, but will not. How is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent him as mocking his helpless creatures, by offering what he never intends to give." — *p. 24.* "It represents the most holy God as worse than the devil; as both more false, more cruel, and more unjust. More false; because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said, he willeth all men to be saved: more unjust; because the devil cannot, if he would, be guilty of such injustice as you ascribe to God, when you say, that God condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire for continuing in sin, which, for want of that grace he will not give them, they cannot avoid: and more cruel; because that unhappy spirit seeketh rest and findeth none, so that his own restless misery is a kind of temptation to him to tempt others; but God resteth in his high and holy place: so that to suppose him, of his pure will and pleasure, happy as he is, to doom his creatures, whether they will or not, to endless misery, is to impute such cruelty to him, as we cannot impute even to the great enemy of God and man." — *p. 26.* "Upon the supposition of this doctrine, one might say to our adversary the devil, Thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls

is as needless and useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands, and that he doth it much more effectually? Thou canst only intice, but his unchangeable decree, to leave thousands of souls in death, compels them to continue in sin, till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou temptest; he forceth us to be damned. Hearest thou not that God is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of man?"

Never did I see such bitter and unfair reflections on the Calvinists, unless in a piece of Castalio's, which I happened to glance above twenty years ago, and which left on my mind an unusual impression of horror. I am not to enter into a doctrinal controversy with Mr Wesley. The preface and defence, like his letter to Mr Hervey, are intended for caution, not for confutation. Cole on God's sovereignty, the Limestreet sermons, Cooper on predestination, and other books abundantly common, have shown, that such consequences do not indeed flow from the Calvinist doctrine. If a further defence be needful, I doubt not some who have leisure and ability will undertake it. All I shall say is, If doing a thing, or permitting it to be done in time, is consistent with God's moral perfections, the eternally decreeing thus to do or permit can never be contrary to them, unless the eternally resolving to do a just thing is unjust. God's decree compels no man to sin, and deprives him of no power to do good. You will say, there flows from the decree an infallible certainty of men's sinning, and perishing in their sins. I allow it: but a certainty no more infallible than would flow from the divine foreknowledge, which Mr Wesley himself allows as a scripture-truth. If the last does not infer the creature constrained, neither does the first. God hath indued the will of man (as is well observed *Westminster confession*, c 9.) with that natural liberty that is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to do good or evil. If man has lost ability to spiritual good, his inability flows not from want of natural powers, but from the depraved byass of his heart: if that depraved byass were cured, duty would be easy. Now, an inability which flows from depravity of heart, may well aggravate guilt, but can

can never excuse it; unless when wickedness becomes obstinate and incurable it ceases to be criminal; and stubborn rebels against the sovereign Lord of the universe have found a device, by their stubbornness of heart, to free themselves from all obligation to loyalty and allegiance.

From the above extracts and observations, it will appear what force there is in the apology for Mr Wesley, *Appeal*, p. 100, 101. "Neither does he say, that predestination is naturally deadly poison; only, that upon some it has that deadly effect. Mr Wesley looks on it to be an edged tool, (as the faculty speak of mercury), if not in the hand of a wise man it may do much harm." Wrong opinions must be the least enemy of religion, or no enemy at all, if a doctrine is not naturally deadly poison, that makes preaching vain, tends to destroy holiness, represents Christ as a deceiver, and the holy God as worse than the devil. Every person, according to Mr Wesley, who maintains, that God from eternity ordained whatsoever should come to pass, must either equivocate and prevaricate, or honestly avow that God is the author of all sin, and the destroyer of the greater part of mankind without mercy. Compare *Dialogue between a predestinarian and his friend*, at the beginning, with the dedication, p. 4. Is there not deadly poison in a doctrine, which can justly be charged with such shocking blasphemy?

Mr Kershaw says, p. 76. "If the editor imagines Mr Wesley lays our works at the bottom of all the fabric of redemption," (I suppose he meant to have said predestination, of which the former sentence speaks), "he does not understand him." Mr Wesley does not lay our works as the foundation of the conditional decree of saving such who should believe, for of that he supposes God's love of pity the cause: but he does suppose them the cause of our actual election, and of Christ's becoming to us in particular the author of eternal salvation. See *Scripture-doctrine concerning predestination*, p. 6, 8.

I had observed Mr Wesley's asserting, that to say Christ died for the elect as elect, is to say that he accomplished a solemn nothing; because the elect, as such, are not lost. Mr Kershaw tells us, p. 79. that a few weeks ago Mr Wesley

ley himself answered this to the editor, together with all that is material in the preface.

Apprehending that this ill-grounded alledgeance might have more effect than all Mr Kershaw's arguments, I sent him Mr Wesley's letter, signifying my willingness it should be published as an appendix to his *Earnest Appeal*. Mr Kershaw returned me the following note.

"As Mr Kershaw had, as he apprehends, sufficient reasons for taking notice of Mr Wesley's letter to the Editor, seeing many made an *ill use* of his *silence* in that respect, when he was here lately; and as he apprehends the letter *implicitly* justifies all he said of it *as wrote to the Editor*, he is by no means unwilling it should be published. Nevertheless, neither the Editor nor the Public can look upon it *as Mr Wesley's full answer* to the Preface. Mr Kershaw is sensible Mr Wesley never *intended* it as such; for if he had, he would have precluded the necessity of his *Reply*. When the note from the Editor came to hand, near three hundred copies of the Reply were gone off, so that it was impossible to print it in the way desired."

How far Mr Wesley's letter was an answer to any thing material in the preface, the reader will best judge by perusing it.

Edinburgh, April 24. 1765.

REVEREND SIR,

**B**etween thirty and forty years I have had the world upon me, speaking all manner of evil. And I expected no less, as God had called me to testify that its deeds were evil. But the children of God were not upon me: nor did I expect they would. I rather hoped they would take knowledge, that all my designs, and thought, and care, and labour, were directed to this one point, To advance the kingdom of Christ upon earth. And so many of them did, however differing from me, both in opinions and modes of worship. I have the pleasure to mention Dr Doddridge, Dr Watts, and Mr Wardrope, in particular. How then was I surprised, as well as concerned, that a child of the same Father, a servant of the same Lord, a member of the same family, and (as to the essence of it) a preacher of the same gospel, should, without any provocation that I know of, declare open war against me! I was the  
more



more surprised, because you had told me some months since, that you would favour me with a letter. And had this been done, I make no doubt but you would have received full satisfaction. Instead of this, you ushered into this part of the world, one of the most bitter libels that was ever wrote against me: wrote by a dying man, (so far as it was wrote by poor, well-meaning Mr Hervey), with a trembling hand, just as he was tottering on the margin of the grave. A great warrior resigned his crown, because "there should be some interval, he said, between fighting and death." But Mr Hervey, who had been a man of peace all his life, began a war not six months before he died. He drew his sword, when he was just putting off his body. He then fell on one to whom he had the deepest obligations, (as his own letters, which I have now in my hands, testify), on one who had never *intentionally* wronged him, who had never spoken an unkind word of him, or to him, and who loved him as his own child. O tell it not in Gath! The good Mr Hervey (if these letters were his) died cursing his spiritual father!

And these letters another good man, Mr —, has introduced into Scotland, and warmly recommended. Why have you done this? "Because you have *concealed* your principles, which is palpable *dishonesty*."

When I was first invited into Scotland, (about 14 years ago), Mr Whitefield told me, "You have no business there: for your principles are so well known, that if you spoke like an angel, none will hear you. And if they did, you would have nothing to do but to *dispute* with one and another from morning to night."

I answered, "If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute: for I will studiously avoid controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity. And if any still begin to dispute, they may: but I will not dispute with them."

I came. Hundreds and thousands flocked to hear. But I was enabled to keep my word. I avoided whatever might engender strife, and insisted upon the grand points, the religion of the heart, and salvation by faith, at all times, and in all places. And by this means, I have cut off all occasion of dispute, from the first day to this very hour.

And

And this you amazingly improve into a fault; construe into a proof of *dishonesty*. You likewise charge me with holding *unsound principles*. and with saying, "Right opinions are (sometimes) no part of religion."

The last charge I have answered over and over, and very lately to Bp Warburton. Certainly had you read that single tract, you would never have repeated that stale objection.

As to my principles, every one knows, or may know, that I believe the thirty-first article of the church of England. But can none be saved who believe this? I know you will not say so. Meantime, in the main point, justification by faith, I have not wavered a moment for these seven and twenty years. And I allow all which Mr Hervey himself contends for, in his entrance upon the subject, "Come to Jesus as a *needy beggar*: hang upon him as a *devoted pensioner*." And whoever does this, I will be bold to say, shall not perish everlastingly.

As to your main objection, convince me that it is my duty to preach on controverted subjects, predestination in particular, and I will do it. At present, I think it would be a sin. I think, it would create still more divisions. And are there not enough already? I have seen a book wrote by one who styles himself, *Ecclesiæ Scoticæ direptæ et gementis Presbyter*. Shall I tear *ecclesiam direptam et gementem*? God forbid! No; I will, so far as I can, heal her breaches. And if you really love her, (as I doubt not you do), why should you hinder me from so doing? Has she so many friends and helpers left, that you should strive to lessen their number? Would you wish to turn any of her friends, even though weak and mistaken, into enemies? If you must contend, have you not Arians, Socinians, seceders, infidels, to contend with? to say nothing of whoremongers, adulterers, sabbath-breakers, drunkards, common swearers! *O ecclesia gemens!* And will you pass by all these, and single out *me* to fight with? Nay, but I will not. I do and will fight with all these, but not with *you*. I cannot: I dare not. You are the son of my Father; my fellow-labourer in the gospel of his dear Son. I love your person: I love your character: I love the work wherein you are engaged. And if you will still shoot at me, (because

more surprised, because you had told me some months since, that you would favour me with a letter. And had this been done, I make no doubt but you would have received full satisfaction. Instead of this, you ushered into this part of the world, one of the most bitter libels that was ever wrote against me: wrote by a dying man, (so far as it was wrote by poor, well-meaning Mr Hervey), with a trembling hand, just as he was tottering on the margin of the grave. A great warrior resigned his crown, because "there should be some interval, he said, between fighting and death." But Mr Hervey, who had been a man of peace all his life, began a war not six months before he died. He drew his sword, when he was just putting off his body. He then fell on one to whom he had the deepest obligations, (as his own letters, which I have now in my hands, testify), on one who had never *intentionally* wronged him, who had never spoken an unkind word of him, or to him, and who loved him as his own child. O tell it not in Gath! The good Mr Hervey (if these letters were his) died cursing his spiritual father!

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cause



cause Mr Hervey has painted me as a monster), even with arrows drawn from Bishop *Warburton's* quiver, (how unfit for Mr ——'s hand!) I can only say, as I always did before, the Lord Jesus bless you in your soul, in your body, in your relations, in your work, in whatever tends to his own glory! I am,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

Mr Wesley has thought it his duty to write against the doctrine of the Westminster Confession, as to predestination, justification, &c, looking upon it as fatal to precious souls. Where-ever therefore he observes plants growing up, that to him appear so poisonous, true benevolence must needs prompt him to endeavour the rooting them out. In Scotland, as well as in England, these doctrines are preached; and if human nature is the same in North as in South Britain, immoral and licentious opinions must in both have the same effects. If therefore the Methodist preachers in Scotland have not attacked these doctrines, and if Mr Wesley approves their conduct, no reasonable account of this can be given, unless that they prudently conclude, a precipitate attack might alarm many of their new profelytes, occasion their forsaking them, and thus prevent that success, which might probably be secured by delay, till they gain a fuller ascendant over their followers.

This was the light in which I viewed and still view Mr Wesley's conduct, and therefore thought it no way inconsistent with Christian charity, to warn those who as yet believe the doctrines of the Westminster confession, not to put themselves under the inspection of a teacher whose principles must oblige him to undermine, if possible, that belief. I once intended to have writ Mr Wesley; and the only time I ever talked with him, signified to him that intention. But, upon mature reflection, I saw no cause to flatter myself, either that I could procure from him satisfaction as to what offended me in his writings and conduct, or that I could convince him he was in the wrong. He had, in my apprehension, discovered himself no novice in the arts of subtilty and disguise. This discouraged me  
from

from a correspondence, which might more probably answer a bad purpose than a good one. A public warning against the growth of Methodism was judged necessary. Those better qualified declining the task, I was at length prevailed upon to undertake it.

Mr Wesley's catholic charity has not restrained him from declaring his resolution to fight with Seceders, nay, from ranking them with Arians and Socinians \*. Their peculiar opinions and practices are much less important than the doctrinal articles in which he differs from the church of Scotland. Why then deems he it uncharitable in a member of that church, to contend with one, who, in the keenest manner, has contended against these doctrinal articles?

Thus I have answered what is material in Mr Wesley's letter, except his reference to his letter to the Bishop of Gloucester, which will afterwards fall in my way.

Mr Wesley had said, *Preservative*, p. 192. "We believe that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left; but that God, when, of his own free grace, he gave the promise of a Saviour to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation." Mr Kershaw asks, p. 80, 81. "Did the editor insert this paragraph to defeat his intention, and confute the whole vindication? Did ever an Arminian in the world declare, I believe that in the moment Adam fell he had no freedom of will left?" I did not charge this paragraph with Arminianism; nay, I think the first part of it verges to the opposite extreme. The will is endued with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor by an absolute necessity determined to do good or evil. This holds good even with respect not only to the most depraved of mankind, but to devils themselves; otherwise they would cease to be the subjects of God's government, and could not as moral agents be punished for their bad tempers and conduct. You will perhaps plead, that Mr Wesley did not mean to deny man's natural but

\* It would be wrong to conclude from this, that Mr Wesley has no charity for Seceders: for Michael Servetus, one of the wildest Antitrinitarians that ever appeared, has been pronounced by him a wise and holy man.

his moral inability. This last was undoubtedly lost by the fall : but then, if this is his meaning, he errs in asserting, that God hath restored to mankind a moral power to accept of proffered salvation. A moral power and an inclination is the same thing. If mankind in general were inclined to accept the proffered salvation, all to whom it is proffered would in fact accept it, as want of inclination can be the only hinderance of such acceptance. In a word, man by the fall lost not his natural powers, and to mankind in general moral powers are not restored.

I see no force in what Mr Kershaw has said to vindicate the Methodists from the charge of forming a church within a church, and leave it without remark. I thank him for correcting my mistake, " that the Methodist teachers " are sent, continued, or removed, at the pleasure of Mr " Wesley," by observing, *p.* 84. " Mr Wesley is not without coadjutors, who act in concert with him ; and what is done, is usually done by consent of the whole."

*P.* 85.—97. Mr Kershaw criticises the editor for saying, " Could not the Methodists be witnesses to Christianity, " without that inquiry into one another's religious experiences, which Christ has no where enjoined, either as a " moral duty, or a mean of grace?" Most of what he says is wide of the point. The lawfulness of religious societies for prayer, praise, and Christian conference, I never denied ; though I think when such societies meet frequently, and are long together, they are an obstruction to family and private devotion, and breach of the precept, " Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work." Neither did I question the happiness of finding a Christian friend to whom we may freely impart our spiritual comforts or distresses ; though I think too, there are cases in which the heart alone should know its own bitterness, and a stranger, however dear to us, should not intermeddle with its joy. What I find fault with, I shall state as briefly as possible.

It appears from *p.* 88. of the *Earnest Appeal*, that the religious experiences inquired into include all things felt in the minds of religious people, whatever God does for their precious souls, whatever temptations or buffetings they may feel from Satan, whatever strugglings and workings from a corrupt nature, and all those temptations and conflicts

slicts in the minds of the religious, arising from the world in its various appearances, connections, or relations, or the providential dispensations by which God proves their virtue, and exercises their patience.

The Methodists conduct their inquiries into religious experiences in this extensive sense of the word: 1. More privately. "There are" (says, Mr Wesley, *Nature, design, and general rules of the united societies*, p. 4.) "about twelve persons in every class, one of whom is styled the leader. It is his business to see each person in his class, once a week at the least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper, &c." 2. More publicly in the meetings of their classes. *Earnest Appeal*, p. 89. "The leader or teacher asks every one a few questions relating to the present situation of their minds, in order that he may the better speak to their edification."

The church of Rome maintain, that in the sacrament of penance, it is *jure divino* necessary to the remission of sins, to confess all and every mortal sin, even the most secret, which can with diligent premeditation be called to mind, together with the circumstances which change the kind of sin; and the priest is directed to ask prudent questions, where the penitent does not express the number, the kinds, and the necessary circumstances of his sins. Against this, it has been justly objected, that there is the utmost danger of violating modesty, by putting questions, under pretence of searching sin to the bottom, which shall suggest wicked thoughts to the minds of young and unexperienced persons, such as otherwise would never have entered there: and that auricular confession, if it is made a point of conscience to confess the most secret sins, leaves the reputation, and, in some cases, the life of the laity at the mercy of the clergy, not only by divulging what is confessed, but by improving their knowledge of mens weaknesses, inclinations, &c. to gain an ascendant over them, and to seduce them to subvert their mercenary or licentious designs. A leader of a class inquiring at the eleven under his charge, what temptations of Satan, what workings of corrupt nature, or conflicts from his worldly circumstances he has encountered, is liable to the very same abuses. If inquiries are honestly answered, the rest of the class are at the mercy of



their leader ; if not, they acquire habits of hypocrisy and dissimulation.

But let us suppose, what can hardly be expected, that every leader of a class is possessed of eminent measures of probity and prudence : yet surely it is next to impossible, that all under his inspection should resemble him in these qualities. In the meetings of a class, the experience of every one who belongs to it, is inquired after, and all present hear the account. A judicious writer has observed, that even in truly gracious experiences, there is often an unhappy mixture of human or natural affections or passions, impressions on the imagination, and self-righteousness, or spiritual pride ; and that experiences are apt to degenerate, by men laying great weight on the natural and imaginary part, and yielding to, and indulging it \*. This degeneracy may be probably increased by a rash, frequent, and promiscuous relation of uncommon experiences. The relators may begin to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. Some of a more tender and circumspect behaviour may be discouraged, because strangers to those extraordinary manifestations : and the narrating our doubts and scruples, the temptations that have assaulted us, or the workings of indwelling corruption in our hearts, may often excite similar doubts or temptations in the breasts of the hearers. A secret can hardly be kept by twelve : and if there is any thing singular in an experience, probably it will be handed about as a secret to the confidants of every member of a class, and to the confidants of these confidants, till it takes air, is publicly talked of, and by the profane turned into ridicule. He who is satisfied with divine consolations, can enjoy rest without divulging what he has felt ; while others, if the companions hearken to their voice, are little concerned to cause God to hear it. These arguments, however, do not militate against Christians often conversing together on the works of creation, providence, and redemption, the glories of the Saviour, the wonders of God's law and gospel, and the important realities of a future world ; nor against imparting to familiar friends, especially when in anguish of spirit, those

\* Edwards's thoughts on the revival, &c. Edin. edit. p. 158, 165.  
consolations,

consolations, wherewith they in like circumstances have been comforted of God. Not to observe, that valuable purposes may be often gained by exhibiting to public view the riches of divine power and grace in remarkable conversions.

The duties of loving one another, rejoicing with them that rejoice, and weeping with them that weep, of praying for one another, and of bearing one another's burdens, are not confined to those of the same class, but extend to all our fellow Christians. Therefore, if they infer an obligation on those of the same class, they infer an obligation on Christians in general, to inquire into one another's experiences, which I suppose Mr Kershaw will hardly plead for.—He is right in saying, the consequence is not good; a thing may be abused to bad purposes, and therefore ought not to be done: because eating and drinking, nay, the Bible, may be abused. But a little reflection might have suggested to him, that though no degree of danger should deter us from a necessary duty, probable bad consequences should restrain us from acting, when no divine precept necessitates us to act. It is therefore a hasty conclusion which he draws, *p.* 90. “that which is neither forbidden in scripture, nor sinful in itself, nor in its necessary consequences, is no sin.” For circumstances of time, place, company, &c. may render a thing, in its own nature indifferent, sometimes a duty, and sometimes a sin.

Mr Kershaw pleads, *p.* 98.—103. that Mr Wesley's reasons against separation from the church of England, or attending the meetings of dissenters, when in South Britain, equally conclude against the Methodist teachers in Edinburgh separating from the church of Scotland, or attending the qualified Episcopal meetings there.—I should be apt, on a superficial view, to be of the same mind. The danger of giving offence, exciting controversy, and preventing thousands from either hearing them or continuing with them, may be as good a political motive for seeming to favour the establishment of Calvinism and Presbytery in one country, as that of Episcopacy in another. Nay, the argument will go much farther. The same prudential rule, if calculated for the meridians of Stockholm, Petersburg, or Vienna, equally directs similar marks of regard to

Lutheranism, the Greek church, or the church of Rome. In all these churches, opinions may be professed opposite to Mr Wesley's: but, so far as I can judge, no opinions that appear to him more dangerous than predestination, final perseverance, and the imputation of Christ's active obedience. But Mr Kershaw seems to forget Mr Wesley's 12th reason against separation from the church of England, That by such separation, they should act in direct contradiction to that very end for which providence had raised them up, *viz.* to quicken their brethren. "The first message, *says he*, of all our preachers, is, to the lost sheep of the church of England. Now, would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the church?" Are there in North Britain no lost sheep of the church of England? or is less pity due to them, because their form of religion has not the advantage of a legal establishment, or of the approbation of the majority of the people? If the first message of the Methodist preachers is to them, should not the very principles, which restrained them from attending dissenting meetings at London, restrain them from attending Presbyterian churches in Edinburgh? The zeal of dissenters generally exceeds that of an established church: and if occasionally hearing in a Presbyterian meeting, offends Episcopalians at London, Episcopalians here will be much more offended, by their almost constant attendance in Presbyterian churches.

The reasonings in Mr Wesley's *Letter*, and in the *Earnest Appeal*, p. 103.—116. may show the impropriety of filling the pulpit or even the press with matters of doubtful disputation, but can never reconcile it with ministerial faithfulness, to give no warning, when errors prevail subversive of vital piety; nay, that imply the most shocking blasphemy.

P. 111. Mr Kershaw proceeds to vindicate Mr Wesley's saying, "It is a point we chiefly insist upon, that orthodox, or right opinion, is at best but a very slender part of religion, if any part of it at all." But as he refers to Mr Wesley's answer to the Bishop of Gloucester, I must begin with considering what is advanced there on this subject.

And here, instead of satisfaction, I find little else than  
that

that shifting, at which Mr Wesley is so singularly expert. *P. 17.* he acknowledges it our duty to labour after a right judgment in all things; as a wrong judgment naturally leads to wrong practice. *P. 19.* he allows that right opinions are a great help, and wrong opinions a great hindrance to religion. *P. 20.* he disclaims saying that errors in faith have little to do with religion, or that they are no lett or impediment to the holy spirit.

Yet he says, *p. 17.* "I say again, right opinion is at best  
" but a very slender part of religion, (which properly and  
" directly consists in right tempers, words and actions),  
" and frequently it is no part of religion. For it may  
" be where there is no religion at all: in men of the most  
" abandoned lives: yea, in the devil himself.

If religion consists in right tempers, the love of God, and consequently what is necessary to produce that love, is no slender part of religion. But how can the love of God be produced in the heart, without suitable opinions of God's loveliness and love? Such opinions are therefore essential to religion, because without them religion never subsists: and the devil's believing the divine perfections, no more proves that right opinion is a slender part of religion, than a projector's laying the foundation of a fabric which he finds himself unable to rear, proves, that a foundation is at best but a slender part of a building, and often no part of it at all.

I stay not to examine Mr Wesley's criticism of Bp Warburton's interpretation of *Eph. v. 9.* If Mr Wesley is right in adopting Bengelius's various reading, "the fruit of light is in all goodness, &c." then right tempers are produced by light in the understanding, *i. e.* by right sentiments: and Mr Wesley asserts, without ground, *p. 20.* that God, generally speaking, begins his work at the heart. His argument is, "Men usually feel desires to please God, before  
" they know how to please him. Their heart says, *What*  
" *must I do to be saved?* before they understand the way  
" of salvation." I reply, Men feel no desire to please God, or even to escape his wrath, till they know something of God; and men can never fall in with a plan of salvation, of which they are wholly ignorant. In the  
new,



new, as in the old creation, God begins with saying, Let there be light.

Let us now see if there is more argument in Mr Kershaw's tedious defence. P. 112. he argues from James's description of religion, *Jam.* i. 26, 27. as consisting in bridling the tongue, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keeping ourselves unspotted from the world: and asks, "What is there here that contradicts Mr Wesley's assertion?" I reply, What if there were nothing? If right opinion is a slender part of religion, because omitted in this passage, will not the same argument equally conclude, that love to God is a slender part of religion too? Besides, right opinion is not omitted in this passage. If we look back to the preceding verses, 23, 25. we shall find the religious person a hearer of the word, and not a forgetful hearer, but one who looketh into the perfect law of liberty. If we look forward to the following verse, *Ja.* ii. 1. he is one who has the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ the Lord of glory: not to insist that the bridling the tongue, v. 26. has a chief reference to the abuse of the tongue in religious matters, e. g. by charging the Deity with tempting us to sin, *Ja.* i. 13. or by asserting that a profession of faith is sufficient to constitute men Christians, without any good works manifesting the sincerity of that profession, *Ja.* ii. 14.

In the same page he calls us to hear what reason says: "Every part is essential to the whole; for the whole is made up of all its parts: now take away any of its parts, and the whole is defective. If then right opinions be essential to salvation, and the whole be destroyed if any of its essential parts be wanting, I may venture to ask, *Who then can be saved?* who will stake his eternal all upon it, that he is right in all his opinions? If right opinion enter into the essence of religion, then religion is destroyed at a blow, if a man be in the least wrong in his opinions." In what laborious forge that reason was hammered out, which utters these oracles, Mr Kershaw best knows. What regard they merit, let himself decide, when he has listened to some more of them, evidently the voice of this some upstart reason. Natural life consists not in the union of the soul and body; for the

the body is made up of all its parts. Now, take away any of its parts, and the whole is defective. If then the body be essential to natural life, and the whole be destroyed if any of its essential parts be wanting, life would be destroyed at a blow, if a man want a nose, a little finger, nay a hair of his head. The body therefore is not essential to animal life; and a man may make a shift to live without a head, or a heart. If here Mr Kershaw would reply, as any man of sense would, that though some of the members of the body may be wanting, and animal life remain, yet that other members are essential to it; let him reflect, that in like manner some opinions may be essential to salvation, while others are not. His proving that a man may be saved, who believes not infant-baptism, would be no proof, that a man can be saved, who believes not that there is a God.

*Earnest Appeal*, p. 113. "Let us examine what matter of fact says: Can any one have any essential part of religion, without having some religion? Surely not. If then any one can be supposed to have a right opinion, he has an essential part of religion; and therefore consequently has some religion. According to this way of reasoning it evidently follows, that there may be some essential part of religion in the worst of men, and devils likewise; this therefore proves too much to be true." By the same medium I prove, that the heart is no essential part of the human body. For an ass must be possessed of a human body, if a heart is essential to it, because an ass has a heart. If you reply, that the heart of a man and of an ass differ in their properties and operations; I beg leave to remind you, that so does right opinion in devils, in bad men, and in the truly religious. Perception of an injury done us, is one essential ingredient in forgiveness of injuries. A revengeful person has that perception, but it would be ridiculous on that account to ascribe to him that amiable virtue. A single ingredient may be essential to complex moral qualities of the most opposite nature. Some knowledge of the gospel of Christ is essential both to a love of that gospel, and to a malicious opposition of it.

P. 113. near the foot, "Religion sometimes means the work of God in the soul, and a suitable conduct *only*;  
" in

“ in this sense Mr Wesley uses it.” Be it so: yet still enlightning the understanding, or producing there right sentiments of divine things, is an essential part of the work of God in the soul. And right opinion is as essential to suitable conduct, as a fountain to the streams, or a foundation to the superstructure.

I had said, “ I much question if Mr Wesley will not find “ it a task too hard for him, to prove, that ignorance and “ error are as friendly to virtue as just sentiments.” To this Mr Kershaw replies. *p.* 115. “ It is certainly enough for “ Mr Wesley if he can maintain and prove his own pro- “ position: for then, in the next place, the editor himself “ must prove, that the consequences he has inferred from “ these premisses are fair, natural, and necessary: but that “ he cannot do, till he has overturned what is here said “ in their defence, &c.” If right opinion is a slender part of religion, or no part of it at all, then the want of right opinion, or the opposite to it, must be a slender obstacle to religion, or rather no obstacle at all; and thus ignorance and error may be as friendly to religion as just sentiments. I have met with nothing in the *Earnest Appeal* to invalidate this consequence.

It is insinuated, *p.* 118. that they who draw such dreadful consequences from Mr Wesley’s proposition, perhaps do all they can to murder the cause of God. To support this heavy charge, it is asked, *p.* 119. “ Have you not seen “ some thousands in Britain and Ireland, who were once “ openly profane, wicked, irreligious persons, but are “ now, as far as man can judge, really converted by the “ means of Mr Wesley, and those who are with him in the “ work, &c. &c. 2 Is not this the Lord’s doing? and can “ any but God convert sinners?” And, *p.* 120. “ Upon “ a supposition that this work is of God, (and is it impos- “ sible to be true?), when Christ is in your assemblies, as “ he certainly is where two or three are met in his name, “ and the minister sounding his alarm as zealously as Paul “ when going to Damascus, Jesus may be saying, Why “ persecutest thou ME in my members?”

To this I reply, 1. I have not such evidence of the facts, from which it is concluded, that thousands have been converted by Mr Wesley and those with him in the work; as

I have,

I have, that many of Mr Wesley's opinions are false, and some of them dangerous errors. For the first I have at best the testimony of man, who may be deceived; for the last, the infallible testimony of God in the sacred oracles. 2. There may be a visible change in the conduct to the better, from other causes than saving grace. 3. Suppose the alledged conversions were all real, will God's blessing his own truths as preached by any, prove, that dangerous errors, mingled by them with those truths, ought to be connived at. The scriptures, not the personal character of a minister, or the success of his ministrations, is the touchstone by which the truth of every particular opinion he advances, ought to be tried. I suppose Mr Wesley will not say, that he and his associates have done more to promote the interests of religion than Calvin and Zuinglius did; and yet he must think, that they who keenly opposed their doctrine as to predestination, &c. did right, and were by no means guilty, in consequence of that opposition, of fighting against God. Peter was the instrument of converting thousands; and yet Paul, when withstanding him at Antioch, was not fighting against God.

P. 120, 121. "Can any man imagine that Mr Wesley should avow a principle, from which it might easily be inferred, that he supposes both ignorance and error are as friendly to virtue as just sentiments? — Are not Mr Wesley's whole life and labours a confutation of this incongruous inference? — Pray to what end has Mr Wesley indefatigably laboured above thirty years, in translating, extracting, abridging, and composing books of experimental and practical divinity, &c." I charge not Mr Wesley with asserting, that ignorance and error are as friendly to virtue as just sentiments: but if this is a just inference from a proposition maintained by him, he is bound to defend it, or else to renounce the proposition too. Mr Kershaw might have seemingly enforced his argument from Mr Wesley's pieces on predestination and justification; but they would only farther prove, that there are inconsistencies in his writings and conduct.

P. 122.—124. Odium is endeavoured to be cast on the prefacer, as maintaining, that all who believe not absolute and unconditional predestination shall be damned. To this



this I would only say, that few Calvinists assert predestination to be absolute and unconditional, in the sense in which their opponents understand these phrases. They assert, that the salvation of some and damnation of others, is so determined in the divine decree, that the event is not suspended on any precarious condition, but is infallibly certain : but they don't assert that the divine decree is founded on no wise reasons to us unknown, but on mere arbitrary will ; nor do they say, that an end is so fixed that it shall be obtained without the means ; but teach, that where the end is ordained, the means are ordained also. Neither are the bulk of Calvinists uncharitable to those who differ from them. While almost all the Lutherans pronounce the Calvinist doctrine of predestination a fundamental error, the Calvinists as generally and justly maintain, that the difference betwixt them and the Lutherans is not fundamental. For my own part, I gratefully acknowledge my obligations to many Lutheran divines, who write in a strain remarkably evangelical, and I think have been excelled by none in explaining and defending justification through the obedience and sufferings of Christ ; yet still the Calvinist doctrine of predestination appears to me revealed in scripture, which it would not have been, had the belief of it been of no importance : and Mr Wesley's variation from that doctrine is, as I apprehend, much more dangerous than those of the Lutheran churches.

Yet this is not the worst error vented by Mr Wesley. He asserts justification by faith as fulfilling the condition of a new covenant, as obeying a new law, or as the great master-duty of the gospel, which includes every other act of new obedience. I question not that good men, by a becoming zeal against Antinomianism, have been betrayed into such assertions, without considering their full import ; while, in the mean time, they have looked for eternal life, not on account of their own virtues, or good works, but on account of the merits and sufferings of Jesus ; yet in these modes of expression they have grossly deviated from the form of sound words. And it is a melancholy symptom of a falling, or rather a fallen church, when the method of acceptance with God, implied in these assertions,

is

is generally taught and believed. See *Jer.* xxxiii. 16. *Gal.* i. 6.—9. & ii. 21.

The charge in Mr Kershaw's appendix of first-rate fundamental mistakes in *Aspasio vindicated*, is so poorly supported, that it deserves no reply. And thus I think I have answered Mr Kershaw in the manner he desires, *p.* 130, except that I have not set my name to the performance. That circumstance is of no consequence to the public, since I assert no facts without appealing to my vouchers. If I had published my name, an artful answerer might have led away the attention of his reader from the charge against Mr Wesley, to some lesser points, in which, on other occasions, I have declared my dissent from certain commonly-received opinions. However, to gratify Mess. Wesley and Kershaw, I now acquaint them, that they are right in their conjecture as to the author of the preface; and therefore that my opinions appear, by my former publications, to differ in some particulars from Mr Hervey's; tho' there was no medium in the preface from which this fact could be fairly concluded, and Mr Kershaw's logic blundered in drawing from it that inference.

I shall now conclude with some remarks on Mr Wesley's writings, which could not be properly introduced in the preceding defence.

*Sermons*, vol. I. *p.* 173. he explains *Rom.* vii. of the struggle betwixt legal convictions and depraved inclinations; and, *ib.* *p.* 193. explains the testimony of the Spirit, as an inward impression upon the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God. The first of these interpretations is well refuted in *Dickinson's familiar letters*, and the second in *Edwards on religious affections* \*. Many judicious divines have indeed fallen into both these mistakes; yet they are not without their danger. The first may greatly discourage the humble Christian, who groans under the workings of indwelling corruption; and the second may strengthen the wicked in his wickedness, while he concludes, that a false and enthusiastical impression is the witness of the Spirit.

\* It seems to me a strong proof of the bad taste of the age, that the republishing so judicious a treatise has not met with due encouragement.

*Sermons*, vol. I. p. 26. "Sincerity therefore is necessarily implied in the being almost a Christian; a real design to serve God; a hearty desire to do his will; a sincere view of pleasing God in all things, in all his conversation, in all his actions, in all he does, or leaves undone. This design, if any man be almost a Christian, runs through the whole tenor of his life."——Was David mistaken when he said, *Psal.* cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed when I have a respect to all thy commandments?"

*Ib.* vol. II. p. 265.—269. In explaining *Matth.* vi. 19. he observes, that it is lawful to lay up what is necessary to discharge our just debts; to provide for ourselves and families the plain necessities of life; to put our children in a capacity, when we are gone, to provide for themselves these necessities, by diligent labour; and to enable us to carry on our worldly business in such measure as is sufficient to answer these purposes: but that labouring after a larger measure of worldly substance than will answer these purposes, is absolutely forbidden."——This tends to perplex tender consciences with endless scruples. Ministers should beware of laying burdens on men which God has not laid. God has indeed denounced a woe against those that add house to house, and land to land, till there be no place in the earth; and has charged the rich to be rich in good works: but if it is lawful to transmit to our children an estate, which we ourselves inherited, as Mr Wesley acknowledges, why should it be unlawful to transmit to them an estate which we have acquired by honest industry? Is not the last as lawful a property, and as entirely at our disposal, as the first?

*Ib.* p. 305. he thus explains *Rom.* x. 3, 4. "Being ignorant of that holiness of heart, which is termed *God's righteousness*, being his free gift through Christ, and his own work by his Spirit, and labouring to establish that outside righteousness, which may be termed *their own*, because neither wrought by the Spirit of God, nor owned and accepted of him, but wrought by their own natural strength, they hardened themselves against that faith, whereby alone it was possible to attain this inward righteousness. For Christ put an end to the law of external rites and ceremonies, that he might bring in a better righteousness through his blood, even the image of God into the inmost soul of every

every one that believeth." And, *p.* 306. he explains *the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. to mean, that holiness of heart, which is the work of God through faith in Christ.—These interpretations should have been mentioned, when I was considering his scheme of justification.

*Sermons*, vol. III. *p.* 47. "On the other hand, they, whose hearers, if unrighteous before, remain unrighteous still, or at least void of any righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they are false prophets, they are not sent of God; therefore their word falls to the ground"—That a faithful minister may labour without success, the scripture denieth not, and experience confirms.

*Ib.* vol. II. *p.* 50. & *seq.* he denies the perseverance of the saints, and represents the gradual manner of their apostasy. And, *p.* 53. he supposes that faith and love were extinct in Peter, when he committed the act of dissimulation for which Paul withstood him to the face.

*Ib.* vol. I. *p.* 8. "They (*viz.* believers) are also saved "from the fear, though not from the possibility of falling "away from the grace of God, and coming short of the "great and precious promises."—How one who believes his total and final apostasy possible can truly love God, and yet feel no fear of so dreadful an evil, is inconceivable.

Mr Wesley seems to maintain not only the attainableness of sinless perfection in a present life, but that it is actually attained by every one born of God.

*Character of a Methodist*, 3d edit. *p.* 10. "Whatsoever he doth, is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye), but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve to this great end. Whether he sit in his house, or walk by the way, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life."

*Sermons*, vol. I. *p.* 9. He that is by faith born of God, sinneth not, 1. By any habitual sin. 2. By any willful sin; for his will, while he abideth in the faith, is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison. 3. By any sinful desire; for he continually desireth the holy and



perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy desire, he, by the grace of God, stifleth in the birth. Nor, 4. By infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought; for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins. Thus he that is born of God doth not commit sin: and though he cannot say he hath not sinned, yet now he sinneth not.

*Sermons*, vol. II. p. 23. An immediate and constant fruit of this faith, whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no not for an hour, is power over sin; power over outward sin of every kind; over every evil word and work; for wheresoever the blood of Christ is thus applied, it purgeth the conscience from dead works: and over inward sin; for it purifieth the heart from every unholy desire and temper.

*Ib.* p. 25. (Having cited *1 John* iii. 9. to prove the believer's power over outward sin, he adds), "But some men will say, True; whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin habitually." Habitually! whence is that? I read it not. It is not written in the book. God plainly saith, he doth not commit sin; and thou addest, habitually! Who art thou that mendest the oracles of God? that addest to the words of this book? Beware, I beseech thee, lest God add to thee all the plagues that are written therein.

*Sermons*, vol. III. p. 203.—234. Christians are not so perfect in this life as to be free, (1.) from ignorance; (2.) from mistakes; (3.) from infirmities, *i. e.* inward and outward imperfections, not of a moral nature, but such as dullness or confuseness of apprehension, a treacherous memory, &c.; (4.) from temptation. But, 1. Even babes in Christ are in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin. The least that can be implied in the expressions, *Rom.* vi. *1 Pet.* iv. 1, 2. *1 John* iii. 8. v. 18. is, that all real Christians cease from outward transgressions of God's law. It will not follow, that because David, one of the holiest men among the Jews, did commit sin, that all Christians commit sin as long as they live. They who argue thus consider not our Lord's declaration, *Matth.* xi. 11. that the least true believer is greater than the highest Old-testament saint. Solomon says, there is no man that sinneth not: and unquestionably there was none in his days, nor from

from the day that sin entered into the world, until the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins. We are told, *John* vii. 38. "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified," *i. e.* these sanctifying influences were not bestowed whereby men are made more than conquerors over sin. For the power of working miracles cannot be meant, that having been given to the apostles, when first commissioned to preach the gospel. That this great salvation from sin was not given, till Jesus was glorified, Peter testifies; where speaking of his brethren, as now receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, he adds, that the prophets only foretold that grace, but did not enjoy it, *1 Pet.* i. 9, 10. So far is David from being the standard of Christian perfection, that it is foretold, *Zech.* xii. 8. "He that is feeble among them shall be as David." 2. They who are strong in the Lord are freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. Every one that is perfect, is as his Master, *Luke* vi. 40. "As he is so are we in this world, *1 John* iv. 17."

I cannot stay to give a full extract of the sermon on Christian perfection, contained in the pages above referred to. But there is an answer to an obvious objection against his scheme, which I shall transcribe, *p.* 218. "The apostles themselves, it is said, committed sin: nay the greatest of them, Peter and Paul. St Paul, by his sharp contention with Barnabas, and St Peter, by his dissimulation at Antioch. Well, suppose both Peter and Paul did then commit sin; what is it you would infer from hence? that all the other apostles committed sin sometimes? There is no shadow of proof in this. Or, would you thence infer, that all the other Christians of the apostolic age committed sin? worse and worse; this is such an inference as one would imagine a man in his senses could never have thought of. Or will you argue thus? If two of the apostles did once commit sin, then all other Christians, in all ages, do and will commit sin as long as they live. Alas, my brother! a child of common understanding would be ashamed of such reasoning as this."

Paul's contention with Barnabas is a strong presumption against the attainable levels of perfection in this life; because of all mere men he seems to have made the great-

est advances towards it. But it is a demonstration of the falsehood of Mr Wesley's proposition, that even babes in Christ are in so far perfect as not to commit sin. Mr Wesley will allow that Paul was then more than a babe in Christ, and yet he sinned. To say, he at that time fell from grace, will hardly quadrate with his subsequent history, at least if Mr Wesley is right in his ideas of the manner of knowing true prophets, from the fruits of their doctrine, as to themselves, and as to their hearers. *Sermons*, vol. III. p. 45.—47.

If we urge against this hypothesis 1 John i. 8. "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:" Mr Wesley replies, *Sermons*, vol. III. p. 223. as Barclay the Quaker did before him, "that the 10th verse fixes the sense of the 8th: "If we say we have no sin" in the former, being explained by "if we say we have not sinned" in the latter verse. Neither of these verses assert that we sin now. And the question is not, whether we have sinned heretofore."

If these writers have reason to insist, that the phrases of forgiving sins and cleansing from all unrighteousness, v. 9. are not an useless tautology, I have equal reason to deny, that ver. 10. is a mere repetition of ver. 8.—The connection and sense of the four last verses, I take to be this. Ver. 7. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Here it might be asked, Have they who walk in the light, as God is in the light, any moral defilement, from which they need to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus? Yes, says the apostle, ver. 8. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Sin, depravity of heart, still remains. We have it, we feel its workings, tho' its dominion is broken by conversion, and its power still further weakened by progressive holiness. Nor does the efficacy of Christ's blood extend only to this, but also to these actual transgressions, from which they that walk in the light are not wholly free. Ver. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Sins and unrighteousness here mean, our violating by ac-  
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tual transgressions, the duties we owe to God, to ourselves, and to one another. *Ver. 10.* "If we say, that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." If we say, that now we are light in the Lord, we have transgressed his precepts in no instance, in thought, word or deed; we hereby give God the lie, and prove that we never felt the saving efficacy of his word.

Absolute freedom from sin is therefore never attained in this life; for if it ever was attained, a consciousness and acknowledgment of such attainment could not, in that instance, be inconsistent with grace. Yet possibly a good man, while he feels and laments his own shortcomings, may rashly infer from the commands of being perfect, that even in this life one may cease to sin. However, from this passage it is clear, that the man who is so far gone in self-flattery, as to imagine that he himself has attained a sinless perfection, *makes God a liar*, represents his law as less strict and holy than it really is, and evidences that God's word has never had any saving efficacy upon his soul. Such thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, is opposite to that poverty of spirit, without which there is no Christianity; and prevents daily penitent application to the blood of Jesus, a habitual watchfulness against the occasions of sin, and a tender pity for our offending brethren. What then shall we think of Peter Bohler, who with three other Moravians testified to Mr Wesley of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present sins \*? What shall we think of those in the neighbourhood of Leeds, of whom Mr Wesley gives this account in his *Journal*, from 17th June 1758, to 5th May 1760, p. 983.? "Having desired that as many as could of the neighbouring towns, who believed they were saved from sin, would meet me, I spent the greatest part of this day in examining them one by one. The testimony of some I could not receive: but concerning the far greatest part, it is plain, (unless it could be supposed that they tell wilful and deliberate lies),

\* *Wesley's Journal* from 1st Feb. 1738, to his return from Germany, 2d edition, p. 29.



“ 1. That they feel no inward sin, and, to the best of their  
 “ knowledge, commit no outward sin. 2. That they see  
 “ and love God every moment, and pray, rejoice, and give  
 thanks evermore.” Or what of Mr Wesley himself? who  
 says, “ This I know, I have now peace with God: and I sin  
 “ not to day, and Jesus my master has forbid me to take  
 “ thought for the morrow \*. And again, “ I have con-  
 “ stant peace, not one uneasy thought; and I have freedom  
 “ from sin, not one unholy desire †.” Nay, what shall  
 we think of every one, who has thoroughly imbibed the  
 system and spirit of Mr Wesley? According to him,  
 “ none can have true faith, without knowing that he hath  
 “ it; for whosoever hath it, is freed from sin, the whole  
 “ body of sin is destroyed in him ‡.” Mr Wesley then  
 acknowledges none for believers, save such, who know  
 they have faith, and know it from their freedom from sin;  
*i. e.* who know it from experiencing, what, according to  
 scripture, none who are true believers can imagine they  
 have experienced. If Mr Wesley declares in his cool  
 judgment, and in the presence of the most high God, that  
 he believes the mystic writers to be one great Antichrist,  
 for so zealously inculcating a refined way of trusting to  
 our own works and righteousness ||; what claim can he  
 have to genuine Christianity, whose professed experience  
 gives God the lie? “ Say I these things as a man, or saith  
 “ not the law the same also?” It is a deadly charity  
 that flatters men with a persuasion that they are in the  
 way of life, whom scripture pronounces in the way of  
 destruction. And neither Mr Wesley’s seeming strictness  
 of behaviour, nor the miracles by which he alledges God  
 has sometimes attested his mission †, will justify those  
 who

\* *Ib.* p. 31.† *Ib.* p. 32.‡ *Journal* from his embarking for Georgia to his return to London, 2d edition, p. 70. || *Journal* from 1st Feb. p. 27.

‡ Indeed he does it with no small caution and address. He  
 observes, *Letter to the Bishop of Gloucester*, p. 78, that no wise  
 man can desire or expect miracles, to prove doctrines that have  
 been proved by scripture and reason; or facts that have been  
 proved by testimony; or these self-evident propositions, “ that  
 “ to change sinners from darkness to light is the work of God  
 “ alone;” and “ that such a change wrought in so many noto-  
 “ rious

who forget the cautions of the wise man, *Prov. xix. 27.*

“ Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err

“ from the words of knowledge,” and *Prov. xiv. 12.*

“ There

“ rious sinners, in so short a time, is a great and extraordinary  
“ work of God.” Yet miracles, though unnecessary, he thinks  
have been wrought.

*Ib. p. 65.—69.* “ But if miracles are not ceased, why do you not  
prove your mission thereby?” As your Lordship has frequently  
spoke to this effect, I will now give a clear answer. And I purpose-  
ly do it, in the same words which I published many years since.

“ 1. I have in some measure explained myself on the head of  
miracles, in the third part of the *Farther Appeal*. But since you  
repeat the demand, (though without taking any notice of the  
arguments there advanced), I will endeavour once more to give  
you a distinct, full, and determinate answer. And, first, I acknow-  
ledge, that I have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears,  
several things, which, to the best of my judgment cannot be ac-  
counted for, by the *ordinary* course of *natural* causes; and which,  
I therefore believe, ought to be *ascribed to the extraordinary inter-  
position of God*. If any man chuse to style these *miracles*, I reclaim  
not. I have diligently inquired into the facts. I have weighed  
the preceding and following circumstances. I have strove to ac-  
count for them in a *natural* way, but could not, without doing  
violence to my reason. Not to go far back, I am clearly per-  
suaded, that the sudden deliverance of *John Haydon* was one in-  
stance of this kind, and my own recovery on *May* the 10th,  
another. I cannot account for either of these in a *natural* way;  
therefore I believe they were both *supernatural*.

“ I must, secondly, observe, that the truth of these facts is  
supported by the same kind of proof, as that of all other facts is  
wont to be, namely, the testimony of competent witnesses; and  
that the testimony here, is in as high a degree as any reasonable  
man can desire. Those witnesses were many in number: they  
could not be deceived themselves; for the fact in question they  
saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears. Nor  
is it credible, that so many of them would combine together  
with a view of deceiving others; the greater part being men  
who feared God, as appeared by the general tenor of their  
lives. Thus in the case of *Jo. Haydon*: this thing was not con-  
trived and executed in a corner, and in the presence of his own  
family only, or three or four persons prepared for the purpose.  
No; it was in an open street in the city of *Bristol*, at one or two  
in the afternoon. And the doors being open from the beginning,  
not only many of the neighbours, from every side, but several  
others (indeed whosoever desired it) went in, till the house could  
contain no more. Nor yet does the account of my own illness  
and recovery *depend*, as you suppose, on *my bare word*. There  
were many witnesses both of my disorder on *Friday* and *Saturday*,  
and

“ There is a way which seemeth right unto a man ; but  
 “ the end thereof are the ways of death.”

If

and my lying down most part of *Sunday*, (a thing they were well satisfied could not be the effect of a slight indisposition) ; and all who saw me that evening plainly discerned (what I could not wholly conceal) that I was in pain : about two hundred of whom were present, when I was seized with the cough, which cut me short, so that I could speak no more ; till I cried aloud, “ Lord, increase my faith : Lord, confirm the word of thy grace.” The same persons saw and heard, that at that instant I changed my posture, and broke out into thanksgiving : that quickly after I stood upright, (which I could not before), and shewed no sign either of sickness or pain.

“ Yet I must desire you well to observe, thirdly, that my will, or choice, or desire, had no place either in this, or any case of this kind, that has ever fallen under my notice. Five minutes before I had no thought of this. I expected nothing less. I was willing to wait for a gradual recovery, in the ordinary use of outward means. I did not look for any other cure, till the moment before I found it. And it is my belief, that the case was always the same with regard to the most *real and undoubted miracles*. I believe God never interposed his miraculous power, but according to his own sovereign will : not according to the will of man ; neither of him by whom he wrought, nor of any other man whatsoever. The wisdom, as well as the power, are his : nor can I find that ever, from the beginning of the world, he lodged this power in any mere man, to be used whenever that man saw good. Suppose, therefore, there was a man now upon earth, who did work *real and undoubted miracles* ; I would ask, by whose power doth he work these ? and at whose pleasure ? His own, or God’s ? Not his own ; but God’s. But if so, then your demand is made not on man, but on God. I cannot say it is modest, thus to challenge God ; or well-suited the relation of a creature to his Creator.

“ 2. However, I cannot but think, there have been already so many interpositions of divine power, as will shortly leave you without excuse, if you either deny or despise them. We desire no favour ; but the justice that diligent inquiry may be made concerning them. We are ready to name the persons on whom the power was shewn, which belongeth to none but God, (not one or two, or ten or twelve only) ; to point out their places of abode : and we engage, they shall answer every pertinent question, fairly and directly ; and, if required, shall give all these answers upon oath, before any who are empowered to receive them. It is our particular request, that the circumstances which went before, which accompanied, and which followed after the facts under consideration, may be thoroughly examined, and punctually noted down. Let but this be done, (and is it not highly needful it should, at least by those who would form an exact judgment ?),  
 and

If any suspect that I have given unfair extracts or abridgments of Mr Wesley's writings, they may, at a very small expence of time and money, compare my references with

and we have no fear that any reasonable man should scruple to say, *This hath God wrought.*

"As there have been already so many instances of this kind, far beyond what we dared to ask, or think, I cannot take upon me to say, whether or no it will please God to add to their number. I have not herein *known the mind of the Lord*, neither am I *his counsellor*. He may, or he may not; I cannot affirm or deny. I have no light, and I have no desire either way. *It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.* I desire only to be as clay in his hand."

Bishop Warburton's *Doctrine of Grace*, and Mr Wesley's *Letter to the Bishop*, refer to many passages in Mr Wesley's *Journals* concerning his alledged miracles. I find no instances among them of raising the dead, giving sight to those born blind, &c. And though there are many accounts of remarkable recoveries from sickness, extraordinary deliverances, judgments on scoffers or apostates, and pretended dispossession of devils; yet the circumstances of some of these accounts do not exclude a possibility of imposture, and the rest may be fairly ascribed to Providence, not miraculously exerted to attest the truth of a doctrine, but co-operating with ordinary, natural, or moral causes. God's approbation or disapprobation cannot be safely concluded from extraordinary deliverances, or sudden and unusual calamities. These things come alike to all men. Besides a party may be justly censurable, though judgments fall on men who scoff at it, or forsake it, for appearances of piety and strictness, and not for any thing really amiss.

There is cause to suspect Mr Wesley may have exaggerated facts that tend to the honour of his party, from his rashness in asserting falsehoods to the disparagement of others. *Journal from 16th Feb. 1755, to 16th June 1758, p. 17*, speaking of the causes why the religious concern in Scotland and New England has been of shorter continuance than that in England under the Methodist teachers, he says "It does not become us to judge peremptorily: but perhaps some of them may be these. 1. Many of them became wise in their own eyes. They seemed to think they were the men, and there were none like them: and hence they refused God the liberty of sending by whom he would send, and required him to work by men of learning, or not at all. 2. Many of them were bigots, immoderately attached either to their own opinions or modes of worship. Mr Edwards himself was not clear of this. But the Scotch bigots were beyond all others; placing Arminianism (so called) on a level with Deism, and the church of England with that of Rome. Hence they not only suffered in themselves and their brethren a bitter zeal, but applauded themselves therein, in shewing the same spirit against all who differed from them, as the Papists did against our forefathers.



with the passages in the books themselves, of all which there are copies in Mr Gray's circulating library, except of the sermon on free grace, which he has also commissioned, and hopes to procure. —

Thus I have gone through a very disagreeable drudgery, in charity to multitudes in danger of being misled. The debt I owe to my congregation and family, and the desire of leisure for purposes which I hope may better promote the interests of religion, forbid me to launch further in this species of charity. If more of it should be needed, I hope my brethren of different denominations, who think as I do in this matter, will not judge it reasonable that they should be altogether eased, and I only burdened. Had Mr Wesley been fair and open in declaring his sentiments; had his errors been of little importance; or had there

forefathers. 3. With pride, bitterness, and bigotry, self-indulgence was joined: self-denial was little taught and practised. 'Tis well if some of them did not despise or even condemn all self-denial in things indifferent, as in apparel or food, as nearly allied to Popery. No marvel then that the Spirit of God was grieved."

The chief instruments of the revival in New England thought, that abstaining from the moderate use of tobacco was a slender part of religion, if any part of it at all. And they testified against lay-exhorters, visions, dreams, impressions on the imagination, &c. by all which, Mr Wesley thinks the work of God in England has been carried on. On what else the above charge is founded I know not, as they were men eminent for their humility, catholic charity, and self-denial. As to the instruments of the revival in Scotland, the names of the late Mr M'Lawrin at Glasgow, Robe at Kilsyth, Warden at Calder, Burnside at Kirkintulloch, Mackie then at St Ninians, Warden then at Camislie, not to mention others who yet survive, are a sufficient confutation of it. None of them were Arminians or Episcopalists: but where was the man among them who placed Arminianism on a level with Deism, or the church of England with that of Rome?

In examining the regard due to Mr Wesley's miracles, it would not be amiss to consult our LORD's warning, *Matth. xxiv. 23.—26.* "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there: believe it not. For there shall arise false christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, inasmuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not.

been

been no appearance of his gaining an influence, which might enable him gradually to introduce them, I would not probably have employed any part of a life, of which so much is already spent, and the remainder so uncertain, in writing on this subject. Inaccuracies of style the candid will forgive; as I only received Mr Kerthaw's pamphlet the first of this month, and different engagements have demanded most of my hours ever since. I have therefore permitted me only to write a line or two at a time. As to my facts and reasonings, I am not conscious there is need of any apology.

Edinburgh,  
July 20. 1765.

### E R R A T A & A D D E N D A.

P. 2. l. 10, 11. *for* rules against, *read* sermon answered by.

P. 11. l. 14. from the foot, *for* act the, *read* the act.

P. 25. l. 13. 14. *after* doctrinal articles? *insert*, What have I said of any of his present opinions more severe than what he himself says of one of them? *Journal from 12th August 1738 to 1st Nov. 1739. p. 75.* "When will ye understand, that the most destructive of all those errors, which Rome, the mother of abominations, hath brought it forth, (compared to which transubstantiation, and a hundred more, are trifles light as air), is, that we are justified by works, or, (to express the same thing a little more decently), by faith and works."

P. 26. l. 1. in some copies, *for* inability, *read* ability.

P. 35. l. 19. *after* the words against God, *insert* The great good of which he imagines the Moravians have been instruments or occasions, has not prevented him from saying, *Journal from 25th Nov. 1746 to 20th July, 1750, p. 110.* "Having procured a sight of that amazing compound of nonsense and blasphemy, the last hymn-book published by Count Zinzendorf's brethren, I believe it was my bounden duty to transcribe a few of those wonderful hymns, and publish them to all the world, as a standing proof, that there is no folly too gross for those who are wise above what is written."

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